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New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

High-level plenary meeting as a contribution to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Agenda item 20

Sustainable development

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity

The President (*spoke in French*): I declare open the one-day high-level plenary meeting as a contribution to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, held in accordance with resolution 64/203 of 21 December 2009 and decisions 64/555 of 15 April 2010 and 64/567 of 13 September 2010.

Biodiversity is at the very heart of life. In declaring 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, the General Assembly launched an appeal to celebrate life on Earth and the value of biodiversity. The International Year of Biodiversity is an invitation to act this year and in the years to come to safeguard the biodiversity of life on Earth. I am very pleased that, at this beginning of the sixty-fifth session, we are holding a meeting of the General Assembly as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity, and I welcome everyone most sincerely.

Throughout time, biodiversity has been essential to human existence, but it is often difficult to grasp its importance, and particularly of the risks run by losing it. And yet, we are nourished by plants and animals, and insects carry out pollination and are an essential link in the food chain. Rain water becomes drinking water due to a process of filtering through the soil. The oxygen that we breathe is the product of the photosynthesis of algae and green plants.

Today, biodiversity is declining throughout the world, and humankind's activities are to a large extent responsible. Climate change is further worsening the problem. Moreover, the deterioration of many vital services rendered by ecosystems jeopardizes the progress accomplished towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, while we are all threatened by a decline in biodiversity, the consequences will be even more onerous for the poorest among us. Many areas rich in biodiversity are in developing countries, the people of which are particularly dependent on agriculture, fishing and forestry for their subsistence.

It is heartening to note that the international community is mobilizing to deal with this threat. The adoption in 2002 of the 2010 biodiversity target was an important milestone. That target, which was also incorporated into the Millennium Development Goal on environment, has not been achieved, but many States that have been inspired by it to take specific measures to protect biodiversity. Furthermore, myriad initiatives are aimed at better reconciling biodiversity and economics and at assessing the economic value of services provided by ecosystems.

A better awareness of the cost of the loss of biodiversity is essential if our actions to protect biodiversity are to be more effective. It is essential for companies to understand the benefits of biodiversity

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and move towards modes of production that are more environmentally friendly and towards a green economy. We need to persevere in our efforts.

Quite recently, last June in Busan in the Republic of Korea, the international community decided to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform aimed at filling the gap between scientific knowledge on the deterioration of the natural environment and the actions of Governments. That was a major breakthrough towards organizing a consistent and effective multilateral response to the loss of biodiversity. Next month in Nagoya, Japan, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity will be held. A new strategic plan for the Convention will be adopted there. It is my hope that our discussions today at this high-level meeting will make a useful contribution to the negotiations to be undertaken in Nagoya in order to ensure that the new plan will be exhaustive, ambitious and feasible.

Preserving biodiversity is inseparable from the fight against poverty, improving health, prosperity and security of present and future generations, as well as from the fight against climate change. Preserving biodiversity is not a luxury; it is a duty.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I commend the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting. Conserving the planet's species and habitats, and the goods and services they provide, is central to sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. This year is not only the International Year of Biodiversity; it is also the deadline by which the international community had pledged to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss. The 2010 target will not be met. Indeed, as we see from the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook, issued by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the global decline in biodiversity is accelerating. Science tells us that our actions have pushed extinctions up to 1,000 times the natural background rate.

The reason is simple: human activities — yours, mine and everyone's. The main causes include deforestation, changes in habitat and land degradation. The growing impact of climate change is compounding the problem.

As with most emergencies, those hardest hit are the poor. We have all heard of the web of life. The way we live threatens to trap us in a web of death. Too many people still fail to grasp the implications of this destruction. They do not see why we need to preserve an obscure frog here or an endangered owl there. Many still think that the Earth is ours to use as we like.

This argument betrays a woeful ignorance of the importance of ecosystems to our well-being as a species, to climate regulation, to water supplies and to food security. In this International Year, we need to demonstrate the concrete benefits of investing in biodiversity. Ecosystem services are directly linked to the bottom line. They are our natural capital. We need to show that protecting ecosystems can help us achieve the Millennium Development Goals and build resilience to climate change.

All over the world, ecosystem services are a massive undervalued subsidy provided by the environment. When we lose these services through mismanagement, crops fail, profits drop, people become poorer and economies suffer. Let us think of the human cost of deforestation in countries such as Haiti and Ethiopia or the dust-bowl in this country in the 1930s.

Last year's financial crisis was a wake-up call to Governments on the perils of failing to oversee and regulate complex relationships that affect us all. The biodiversity crisis is no different. We are bankrupting our natural economy. We need to fashion a rescue package before it is too late.

Next month, 193 parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will meet in Nagoya, Japan. They will adopt a new strategic plan on biodiversity and a 2050 biodiversity vision. This overarching international biodiversity framework is the result of a comprehensive and inclusive two-year process. It calls for concrete national targets before the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012, the engagement of all stake-holders and the inclusion of biodiversity considerations across all sectors of our society. It includes the means of implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It will address the important issues of access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from them.

It is a solid plan on paper, but it will need leadership to bring it to life, not just from

environmental ministers but from finance and planning ministers, economic production and transport ministers, and health and social welfare ministers. Moreover, we must stop thinking of environmental protection as a cost. It is an investment that goes hand in hand with the other investments that heads of State and Government must make to consolidate economic growth and human well-being in their countries. Maintaining and restoring our natural infrastructure can provide economic gains worth trillions of dollars each year. Allowing it to decline is like throwing money out of the window.

I urge all leaders present today to commit to reducing biodiversity loss. That will be their legacy and their gift to generations to come.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Alsaidi, Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen): I have the distinct honour and privilege to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This is the first time in the history of the United Nations that the issue of biodiversity is being addressed at the level of heads of State and Government. Our meeting today provides not only a unique opportunity to highlight the challenges we face, but also the opportunity that managing the resources of biodiversity offers, in particular as it relates to eradicating poverty and improving the livelihood of millions of people. Biodiversity is a key element of development.

As the natural wealth of the poor, biodiversity is critical to developing countries. The poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries depend on biodiversity for a range of services — from health and nutrition to serving as a safety-net when faced with climate variability and natural disaster — and even for their livelihoods. At the same time, developing countries are a treasure trove of biodiversity and home to some of the rarest and most unique species that in turn hold valuable genetic resources. Today, species are disappearing at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate of extinction, undermining nature's ability to provide us with the good services we so greatly depend on.

It is the poor of the world who will suffer the most if we do not stop the loss of our biological resources, since the poor depend disproportionately on biodiversity for their day-to-day livelihoods. Continued biodiversity loss, including through unsustainable use, threatens to increase poverty and undermine development. Biodiversity can no longer be seen as an issue separate from efforts to tackle poverty and improve the health, wealth and security of present and future generations. This can happen only if we finally give biodiversity the priority it deserves.

Now more than ever, the Group of 77 and China calls for the urgent implementation of the three objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in a mutually supportive manner. Indeed, the conservation of biological diversity cannot be achieved without the sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from genetic resources. Not only are all three pillars of the Convention important to the development of developing countries, but they also provide important tools in our fight against poverty. To that end, an effective international framework must be in place to ensure enhanced implementation of the three objectives of the main multilateral instrument on this matter, the Convention on Biological Diversity. These objectives are conservation, the sustainable use, and the fair, equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of biodiversity.

We must strengthen global partnerships and international commitment to ensure that owners of biodiversity resources and the traditional knowledge associated with them, which are mainly the developing countries, receive the benefits arising from the use of those resources. Furthermore, developing countries will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals without addressing, along with the developed countries, the international threat to biodiversity, in particular the misappropriation of genetic resources and biopiracy.

To this end, the adoption of the protocol on access and benefit sharing at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held next month in Nagoya, Japan, is of strategic importance. The adoption of the protocol will be key to the success of the new biodiversity strategic plan for 2011-2020 to be adopted in Nagoya. This new biodiversity vision for 2050 and

the 2020 biodiversity target require the urgent mobilization of new and additional financial resources.

The success of the Aichi Nagoya summit will be the best gift to this year's celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity and a good omen for the success of the United Nations decade on biodiversity. However, the challenges of the continued loss of biodiversity, compounded by climate change, require the full engagement of all stakeholders, as well as the active engagement of all Governments without exception. The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its call on the sole remaining country that has yet to accede to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to do so as soon as possible. Indeed, universal participation in the Convention on life on Earth is an idea whose time has indeed come.

The Convention on Biological Diversity will hold its tenth Conference of the Parties in Nagoya next October. The Group of 77 and China takes this opportunity to underscore the need for great mobilization and political will so that we will be able to adopt the protocol on access and benefit sharing and ensure that the post-2010 targets are able to be met through new, additional and sufficient financial resources and the transfer of technology to developing countries.

At the Nagoya Conference, parties are expected to boost the implementation of the Convention. The success of our ongoing commitment to the cause of biodiversity will rest upon ensuring a balanced and effective outcome in Nagoya that will provide the tools for addressing the challenges facing biodiversity. In this regard, agreement in two broad areas — the successful conclusion of negotiations on the protocol on access and benefit sharing, and the successful conclusion of the discussion on the post-2010 strategic plan of the Convention and a resource mobilization strategy — is key to leading to a successful implementation of the Convention. The level of ambition in establishing targets for reducing biodiversity loss in this plan should be matched by equal targets for the means to implement such commitments.

The Group of 77 and China is committed to finalizing the draft multi-year plan of action for South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development, as mandated by the ninth Conference of Parties, and calls on all parties to demonstrate commitment and support for its adoption at the tenth meeting of the Parties to the Convention. In this context, we welcome the convening of the First South-South Cooperation Forum on Biodiversity for Development to be held in Nagoya, Japan, on 17 October 2010. We also express our appreciation to the Convention secretariat for establishing a strategic partnership with the Group of 77 and for its support in elaborating the multi-year plan of action, which provides a unique opportunity to enhance the solidarity and global cohesion of the Group in support of the new biodiversity strategy.

More than ever, the establishment of a global alliance for protecting life on Earth is required. This unique event offers us a unique opportunity as leaders of the world to provide leadership and to lead by example for the benefit of life on Earth. The Group of 77 and China is fully committed to playing its role and calls on its partners, as well as the United Nations system, to support the new biodiversity strategy for the next decade so as to ensure that our children will continue to benefit from the vital services provided by our planet.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to the successful outcome of the Nagoya meeting and reiterates that the post-2010 strategic plan, along with a strategy for resource mobilization and a new international regime on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from their use, are indivisible components of an improved global policy framework for biodiversity policy that conserves biodiversity, uses its components sustainably, and ensures that the benefits from the use of the genetic resources of our planet are shared equitably.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Izabella Teixeira, Minister of the Environment of Brazil.

Ms. Teixeira (Brazil): In 2006, Brazil hosted the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. For us, that initiative was steeped in political and symbolic meaning, given the enormous responsibility Brazil has towards biodiversity. As a megadiverse country, Brazil is aware of the strategic value of biodiversity and of the attention and urgency we should dedicate to it. Most scientists, politicians, business people and civil society understand the role of biodiversity as the basis for sustainability. For no other purpose did the General Assembly adopt resolution

62/203, declaring 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, and for no other reason do we meet here today.

This is definitely the time to transform our words and political discussions into action. We should pave the way for a more sustainable society, since what we have at present is quite a disturbing picture. We have been unable to reduce the rate or speed of the loss of biodiversity, as called for in the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Not only has there been an absence of relevant signs of a reduction in biodiversity loss, but indicators portray a growing deterioration of biodiversity worldwide.

One of the key messages of the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was that, over the past century, certain economic sectors have benefited from the conversion of natural ecosystems and the exploitation of biodiversity. But these gains have been achieved at the cost of increasing losses to biodiversity, the degradation of ecosystem services, and an increase in and spread of poverty. We need strong and determined responses and political will to change this scenario, in particular in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. The conservation and sustainable use of biological resources are crucial not only to ensuring continued benefits to local and indigenous communities, but also to creating opportunities for sustainable development and poverty eradication for all.

Brazil is doing its part. According to the latest edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook, Brazil is one of the few countries to have contributed to clearing up this picture. Under President Lula's leadership, Brazil has achieved significant results. We have created the greatest number of new protected areas in recent years and have managed to reduce to historical lows deforestation rates in the Amazon region. But much remains to be done.

I should highlight the important outcome we reached in South Korea for the establishment of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. By creating adequate links between science, policymaking and capacity-building through the provision of credible and relevant information on biodiversity ecosystem services, the platform will improve our understanding of the need for immediate action against the loss of biodiversity, as well as of the consequences of inaction.

The lasting success of our efforts will rest on decisions to be taken at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya. We have been negotiating a protocol on access and benefit sharing that will be fundamental to overcoming the implementation deficit of the Convention and to combating biopiracy. We have been discussing a new strategic plan for the period post-2010 and a new strategy for resource mobilization. A central part of our future efforts must include support for national agendas to reach targets on biodiversity, ensuring country ownership and supported by predictable, additional and sufficient resources and technology. These three elements — the protocol on access and benefit sharing, the strategic plan and the new strategy for resource mobilization — are part of an indivisible package for the tenth meeting of the Conference. They should be considered, discussed and negotiated with the attention and urgency that the matter deserves.

If there is one reason for discussing the issue of biodiversity at a high level, as we are doing here today, it should be to rescue the spirit of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which led to such significant results as the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity. I call on all to renew that same sentiment of commitment, political will, and ethical-moral responsibility for the well-being of current and future generations.

We need a deal in Nagoya. The news from Montreal was a sign that we are quite far from a deal. Some countries are not fully committed to an agreement on access and benefit sharing. At this high-level meeting, we should raise the profile of biodiversity and galvanize the political will and engagement of all countries in support of this call for action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Norbert Roettgen, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany.

Mr. Roettgen (Germany): In this International Year of Biodiversity, the loss of species and habitats is continuing at a dramatic pace. Second by second, minute by minute, we are destroying the natural foundations of our lives. During the time of my speech alone, the equivalent of 170 football fields will have been deforested. More than 900 tons of fish will have

been taken from the world's oceans. One more species might even have vanished from our planet forever.

And we let it happen. We let it happen even though we value these plants and animals as part of our world, and even though we know that biological diversity is vital to feeding humans. Biological diversity is the foundation of our very own survival. Every day, without a second thought, we use numerous services provided by nature and thus by biodiversity — clean air and water, fertile soils, pollinating insects, natural coastal protection, and carbon dioxide storage in forests, wetlands, soils and the seas. Conserving biological diversity is not a luxury; it is a necessary insurance and an investment in our future and our lives.

The conservation of biological diversity does not yet receive the same amount of attention as the issue of climate change, but attention is a precondition for political action. Conserving biological diversity worldwide requires committed and long-term action. And it requires cooperation among the international community.

At today's high-level meeting, let us send a signal and make a global pact for biological diversity. Let us do so by recognizing the value of biological diversity for human well-being and for the global economy and by integrating it into our economic policies, instruments and accounting; by massively reducing our ecological footprint and restructuring production, trade and consumption; by making greater use of biological diversity as a basis for sustainable innovations, and ensuring equitable sharing of the benefits resulting from the use of genetic resources; by strengthening the global network of protected areas, especially those at sea, to give nature the space to retreat; by improving the knowledge of biological diversity and making it available to political decision-makers in a suitable form; and, not least, by strengthening the financial foundations for tackling these challenges at the national and international levels.

In the framework of our presidency of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, we have striven together with all our partners actively to promote this process. Most recently in Geneva, in an unprecedented meeting with the previous and future presidencies of the Conference of the Parties, we adopted a call for action addressed to the participants here today. In the spirit of that call for action, let us lay the foundations here in New York and at the upcoming tenth meeting Conference of the Parties to halt the loss of biological diversity in the coming decade. Let us follow the path of biodiversity — a path lined with forests and oceans and the most diverse and vibrant life forms our planet has to offer for our joy and for our children's survival.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Seiji Maehara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Maehara (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): On the occasion of this important meeting today, I express my heartfelt appreciation to you, Sir, for your leadership.

At present many species on Earth, which has sustained life for more than four billion years, are dying out and biodiversity is being lost at an unprecedented rate. Currently, swathes of forest equivalent to one-third of the area of Japan are vanishing from Earth every year. If the destruction of the ecosystem continues at this pace, in the near future mankind could lose most of nature's bounty for all eternity. If that should happen, we will not be able to pass on the blessings of nature to future generations. As this year marks the International Year of Biodiversity, we should understand that the loss of biodiversity has been caused by none other than human activities. We now need to be aware that we must take new action and change our behaviour so as to halt this loss.

In October, Japan will host the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya city, Aichi prefecture, aimed at achieving a global agreement on launching new actions. One of the main objectives of the Conference is to set global targets for 2020 and 2050 as common guidelines for formulating national strategies. It is important that we paint a clear picture of the concerted action to be taken over the next 10 years so that coming generations will be able to enjoy the blessings of nature.

At the tenth meeting of the Conference, we will also negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on a new international regime in the area of access and benefit sharing as related to genetic resources, as well as on international rules with regard to living modified organisms. In particular, negotiations on access and

benefit sharing could be affected by the differing interests of the users and suppliers of genetic resources. However, if the parties can agree on a new regime, it could be an epoch-making agreement to facilitate the flow of funds for habitat conservation, and thus contribute to the benefit of the entire planet. Japan will do its utmost as Chair to ensure that agreements are reached on these issues at the meeting, and we request the support of all parties concerned.

Japan will contribute to global efforts, acting on its own innovative initiative. First, Japan proposes the adoption of a resolution on a United Nations decade of biodiversity at this session of the General Assembly. The resolution would call for the promotion of concerted action over the next 10 years, not only within the framework of the Convention, but also throughout the entire United Nations system. Japan will also strive for the adoption at this session of a resolution on the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Once established, the platform is expected to provide a scientific basis for biodiversity conservation policies and to lead to a broad understanding of the importance of such policies.

Japan will also lead international efforts in promoting conservation and the sustainable use of the natural environment in regions that have been created through such human activities as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Japan will propose this approach, which we refer to as the Satoyama initiative, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, with a view to enabling the experiences and practices developed in different regions of the world to be shared internationally. Japan will put to good use its expertise and experience in supporting other countries.

In addition, Japan intends to propose assistance measures to support developing countries in the steady formulation and implementation of national strategies, if a global common target is agreed upon at meeting of the Conference. In consultation with other countries, Japan will consider appropriate measures that will exploit its knowledge and technologies.

Japan has long valued living in harmony with nature through the ingenious utilization of nature's abundant gifts in our daily lives and activities. As the Earth and humankind are in crisis caused by the loss of biodiversity, we are urged to address the root cause by making our lifestyles and behaviour more harmonious with nature. By taking advantage of our experience in living with nature, Japan is committed to being at the forefront of the global action to be initiated at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. I looking forward to seeing all present here again and to engaging in discussions with them at that meeting, which will be held under the theme "Living in harmony with nature".

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Barroso (European Union): On behalf of the European Union, I have the honour to speak today in this meeting, which is a very important, unique and welcome opportunity to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity. It is also perhaps one of the last opportunities to exchange views before the Nagoya meeting, at which important decisions will be taken to set the course of global biodiversity policy and action for the next decade.

It is significant that our meeting today should coincide with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) summit. Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides cut across many of the MDGs, and not just one. Our ability to end poverty and hunger and improve child and maternal health depends on the long-term availability of the fresh water, food, medicine and raw materials that nature provides. This comprehensive and holistic approach makes it also clear that the €1-billion MDG initiative I announced here two days ago can also benefit biodiversity. It is also clear that we will not be able to mitigate climate change or adapt to its impacts, or to prevent desertification and land degradation, if we do not protect our ecosystems and biodiversity. And yet, despite these interlinkages, we have collectively failed to reach our 2010 biodiversity target. Instead, we continue to lose biodiversity worldwide at an unprecedented rate.

We are standing at a crossroads. Either we take concerted action to reverse biodiversity loss as soon as possible, or we compromise our own future and that of generations not yet born. Nagoya is our chance to turn the situation around. It is our chance to make decisions that will strengthen the implementation of the Convention's three key objectives.

First, it is important that we adopt a new and effective strategic plan that encourages collective action and is supported by all those who use biodiversity and whose activities have an impact on it. This plan must be sufficiently ambitious to force all parties to the Convention to raise their game, to tackle the key drivers of biodiversity loss, and to prevent ecological tipping points from being reached.

Secondly, it is important that we finally conclude negotiations on the protocol on access and benefit sharing, as we have pledged to do on several occasions. The protocol should ensure transparency, legal certainty and predictability for those seeking access to genetic resources, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from them. I am reassured by the spirit of collaboration and partnership exhibited during the negotiations in Montreal in recent days. However, hard work is still ahead of us if we are to find answers to the unresolved questions. Agreeing on a meaningful protocol will require the full political commitment of all parties and the willingness to compromise.

Thirdly, it is important that we agree on how best to build capacity and mobilize resources — scientific, technological, human and financial — to enable all parties to implement their commitments under the Convention. The European Union has committed, as part of its 2020 biodiversity target, to step up its contribution to averting global biodiversity loss. From 2002 to 2008, we provided more than $1 billion annually for global biodiversity. In addition, European Union member States contributed significantly to the recent replenishment of the Global Environment Facility, of which $1.2 billion is earmarked for biodiversity. That represents a 28 per cent increase compared to the last replenishment.

Of course, there are other ways beyond new and additional public finance to further enhance the implementation of our commitments under the Convention. We need to explore all options, including the reform, elimination and reorientation of subsidies harmful to biodiversity, and private funding such as payments for ecosystem services and other market-based instruments. The European Union is prepared to work together with all parties to improve and ensure long-term sustainable support for implementation. But it is also our view that this responsibility should be shared by all parties. Indeed, increased efforts are needed on the part of all of us to ensure that biodiversity objectives are given sufficient priority in Government plans and programmes.

The messages in the international study on the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity are clear. Valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services should come naturally. After all, investing in biodiversity is not a luxury; it is a sound investment that can bring multiple benefits.

Let me conclude by saying that the European Union welcomes the decision reached in the Republic of Korea last June on the need to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. We look forward to a positive decision by the General Assembly before the end of the year on establishing this important platform in 2011.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

Before adjourning this meeting, I remind representatives that the thematic panel "The way forward in achieving the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the internationally agreed biodiversity goals and targets" will take place, immediately following this plenary meeting, in Conference Room 2 of the North Lawn Building.

I wish all participants a most productive panel discussion.

The meeting rose at 10 a.m.